

President Bush objected. One gives our military a well-deserved pay raise, and the other offers surviving spouses of fallen armed servicemembers an additional \$40 per month.

Our men and women in uniform and their family members have sacrificed enormously. They have earned honor, and they deserve the benefits that would be provided to them in this bill.

While the President has repeatedly called for supporting our troops and their families, it appears that his words do not match his deeds. On the other hand, this Congress has committed to providing our troops the equipment, training and benefits they need and deserve, ensuring our veterans get the care to which they are entitled and caring for our military families who endure many issues when their loved ones serve overseas and when they return home.

Our Nation owes our soldiers, our veterans and our families more than just empty talk.

SUPPORTING THE TROOPS WITH A FAIR PAY RAISE

(Ms. SHEA-PORTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I was a military spouse and I lived on military pay. It is very difficult to do that. But we do that with honor and with gratitude for the chance to serve this country.

The House of Representatives recognizes that service and called for a 3.5 percent increase in pay for the military. The President, who talks about supporting the troops, does not want that. He is strongly opposed to raising the pay of military families.

How much does that really mean? For an E-4, it means \$200 a year. \$200 a year. The President provides \$536 billion of tax breaks for the top 1 percent, and is unwilling to give \$200 a year to an E-4. Seventy times what we are asking, seventy times, goes to the rich.

It is time for the President to start supporting the troops instead of supporting the rich. I hope before Veterans' Day, the President changes his mind and agrees with the House of Representatives that our men and women in uniform deserve this pay.

BEING HONEST ABOUT PLANS IN IRAQ

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, many of my friends ask me as we struggle to fund this war, why are the Iraqi Parliamentarians going on a 2-month vacation? The answer is very simple: Self-preservation. The AP reported that "a few shells" fell in the Green Zone last weekend. Well, my sources in Amman and in Baghdad told me that 47 mortar rounds landed in the Green Zone on Sunday, and on Monday

they hit the parliament building, destroying the office of Dr. Mashhadani 5 minutes after he left it.

The AP also reports that the Defense Minister, Mr. Obeidi, has told reporters that Iraq's military was drawing up plans in case U.S. forces left the country quickly. "The army plans on the basis of a worst case scenario so as not to allow any security vacuum. There are meetings with political leaders on how we can deal with the sudden pull-out."

It sounds to me like we are looking at off-the-hotel-roof in Vietnam, or maybe it was the pullout from Beirut.

I wish, Mr. Speaker, we could make the President be honest with us about what he is actually planning. The world can't figure it out.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Recorded votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

HONORING THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE ON THE OCCASION OF THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 171) honoring the Marquis de Lafayette on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of his birth, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 171

Whereas Marie-Joseph-Paul-Yves-Roch-Gilbert Du Motier, commonly known as the Marquis de Lafayette, was born on September 6, 1757, and occupies a considerable place in the history of the United States;

Whereas Lafayette was a man of considerable military skill who expressed sympathy for American revolutionary fighters, decided to aid colonists in their struggle for independence, and was voted by Congress the rank and commission of major general in the Continental Army;

Whereas Lafayette's military service was invaluable to General George Washington during many Revolutionary War battles, earning him the reputation as "the soldier's friend";

Whereas Lafayette's strategic thinking, military skill, and dedication as a general officer serve as a model for present day American military officers;

Whereas Congress appropriated awards and honors in honor of Lafayette's service to the American people, including the commissioning of a portrait that hangs in the House Chamber;

Whereas because of Lafayette's strong belief in freedom, he advocated the abolition of slavery in the Americas, favored equal legal

rights for religious minorities in France, and became a prominent figure in the French Revolution;

Whereas, in 1824, at the invitation of President Monroe, Lafayette embarked upon a triumphant, 13-month tour of all 24 States of the then-United States, during which he became the first foreign dignitary to address the House of Representatives, and visited many Masonic bodies;

Whereas because of America's affection for Lafayette, many United States cities, towns, and counties have been named for him;

Whereas Lafayette symbolizes the assistance America received from Europe in the struggle for independence;

Whereas United States aid to France during the world wars of 1917-1918 and 1941-1945 stemmed in part from shared values of democracy and freedom, which Lafayette strongly supported;

Whereas the friendship between the people of the United States and France has not diminished; and

Whereas continued relationships between the United States and France are important to the success of our global partnerships: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors Marquis de Lafayette on the 250th anniversary of his birth; and

(2) urges the cadets of the United States military academies and military officers participating in various professional military education courses to study Lafayette's impact on the creation of the United States and on the United States military.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I hail from Lafayette County, Missouri. Its county seat is Lexington, my home. A few miles west-bound on Highway 224 are the small towns of Napoleon, Wellington and Waterloo. These communities, which are nestled into the fertile farmland and rolling hills south of the Missouri River, are named after prominent figures or places in French history. They are a very long way from France. But their names and the namesake of my home county, Marquis de Lafayette, reflect a friendship that has existed between the United States and France since the early days of the American Revolution.

No one person better symbolizes that friendship and the assistance American colonists received from Europe in our struggle for independence than the Marquis de Lafayette. He occupies a considerable place in the history of the United States, which is why I was

pleased to author H. Res. 171, a resolution honoring the life of the Marquis de Lafayette on the occasion of his 250th birthday on September 6, 2007.

Lafayette was a man of considerable military skill who sympathized with the American revolutionary fighters. After withdrawing from the French army and traveling across the ocean at his own expense, the Congress voted Lafayette the rank and commission of major general in the Continental Army. His military service during the Revolutionary War was invaluable to George Washington, earning him the reputation as "the soldier's friend." Lafayette's strategic thinking and dedication as a general officer serve as a model for our present day military personnel.

After achieving military victory, Lafayette returned to France, helping the U.S. secure trade agreements and critical loans with European nations. He also became a prominent figure in the French Revolution, speaking out in support of universal freedom and human rights.

Because of Lafayette's commitment to America, Congress honored him with awards of money and land. Congress was also presented a life-size portrait of Lafayette that hangs here in the Chamber of the House of Representatives. The other large portrait is of President George Washington, Lafayette's closest friend and role model.

At the invitation of President James Monroe, Lafayette returned to the United States in 1824. He embarked upon a triumphant tour, during which he visited 24 States, including Missouri, and he became the first foreign dignitary to address the House of Representatives. Lafayette also visited many Masonic bodies across America.

During this visit and thereafter, various American leaders honored Lafayette by naming cities, towns and counties for him or for his French estate, known as LaGrange. Schools, monuments and parks were named for him throughout the United States. One of the most prominent is Lafayette Park in Washington D.C., which is located directly across from the White House.

As we take a moment this year to honor the Marquis de Lafayette on the occasion of his 250th birthday, let us remember how he helped secure American independence and helped establish the United States as an international presence. The values of democracy espoused by our Founding Fathers and by Lafayette have been the bedrock of U.S. domestic and international policy-making for generations. I urge all Americans, and especially those wearing the American military uniform, to study Lafayette as America pays tribute to him this year.

As we take to the floor today to honor a respected Frenchman, I would be remiss if I did not also take the opportunity to say a word of appreciation to the current French Ambassador to the United States, Jean-David Levitte.

□ 1030

Through his time in Washington, I have come to know Ambassador Levitte as a fine person and an outstanding representative of the people of France. Last week, I learned that the newly elected French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, has appointed Ambassador Levitte to be his chief diplomatic adviser. Let me take this means to wish him well as he takes on more responsibilities. But more importantly, let me thank him for his friendship.

I ask Members to support H. Res. 171. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 171, a resolution that honors Marie-Joseph-Paul-Yves-Roch-Gilbert Du Motier, commonly known as the Marquis de Lafayette, on the occasion of his 250th birthday.

Lafayette is honored here in the House Chamber with a greater-than-life-size portrait, only joined by a portrait of George Washington. This is a reminder also that France was America's first ally.

H. Res. 171 was introduced by a man I admire greatly, the Armed Services Committee chairman, IKE SKELTON, a leader in promoting the study of history.

My family has a strong French heritage. My home State of South Carolina is proud of the French Huguenot settlers highlighted by General Francis Marion, the Swamp Fox of the American Revolution, and I am grateful to have cosponsored this resolution.

The Lafayette family was one of ancient nobility. Lafayette was merely 2 years old when his father was killed in the Seven Years War. At the age of 16, he inherited his title, although he later renounced the "marquis," and a large fortune was received from his grandfather.

In keeping with his family tradition, Lafayette joined the French Army at the age of 14, and was a junior officer in the French army when he defied the orders of King Louis the Sixteenth and sailed to the American Colonies from Spain. In speaking of the colonists' Declaration of Independence, he stated in his memoirs, "My heart was enrolled in it."

At age 20, after volunteering to serve in the American Army at his own expense, he received the rank of major general from the United States Congress.

My home State of South Carolina is particularly appreciative of Lafayette in that he landed in America near the South Carolina city of Georgetown on June 13, 1777, at the young age of 19.

Lafayette commanded members of the American Army during several conflicts, faced off against Benedict Arnold, and ultimately faced off against Lord Cornwallis where he commanded the brigade at the siege of Yorktown in Virginia.

Throughout his time in America, Lafayette became close friends with General George Washington. They were so close that Lafayette named his son Georges Washington-Lafayette, and asked General Washington to be his son's godfather. He also was very close with young Alexander Hamilton, Washington's chief aide-de-camp.

Because of Lafayette's service to the American people, he was made an honorary U.S. citizen in 2002. Many U.S. towns and cities have been named after him, and three U.S. naval vessels bear his name.

I am proud that Lafayette's dedication, military skill and strategic thinking as an officer now serve as a model for our officers in uniform. General Lafayette symbolizes the assistance America received from Europe during our dynamic struggle for independence. And because of our shared values for democracy and human rights, a deep, long-lasting friendship between the United States and France continues and flourishes to this day.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased this resolution has been brought to the floor, and I urge my colleagues to join me in support of the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to my friend and colleague, the former judge and gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE).

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. SKELTON for sponsoring this legislation, and I appreciate Mr. WILSON yielding me time to speak on this important individual.

It is true in this House of Representatives, what we call the People's House, there are only two portraits. There could be more, but there are only two. We honor George Washington and we honor Lafayette. And there are reasons for that; because both of these men were not only friends, but they were resilient in their quest for American liberty many, many years ago.

One evening in 1776, at the dinner table with King George III's relatives, the Marquis de Lafayette got wind of America's Declaration of Independence written by Thomas Jefferson and the trouble the colonists were making for the British—all in the name of liberty.

Facing disapproval from his Noble family and arrest by his own French people, young Lafayette sailed to America. He volunteered to serve at his own expense in the Continental Army with General George Washington. Lafayette was a superior military tactician, and he was fearless. Only in his late 20s, Major General Lafayette went to war with the American colonists.

He was wounded in the battle at Brandywine, he defeated the Hessians alongside General Greene at Gloucester Point, and he stayed faithful to Washington when even some American discontented generals thought they could do a better job than George Washington.

It was Lafayette who persuaded the French to help the Americans in their fight for freedom. And Lafayette never lost his place alongside Washington and his ragged Continental Army. That is one reason we have his portrait in this House.

Lafayette remained a passionate advocate for the cause of freedom until his death, and stood firm in the French Revolution. So much so that at one point he suffered imprisonment for 5 years in Austria and Prussia because of his quest for liberty in France.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor a man who paid both blood and money on two continents for the sake of liberty. As loyal as he remained to Washington and the United States throughout his life, so the people of our great Nation remain indebted to his sacrifice, his courage and his loyalty, and to the example of his unwavering commitment to freedom.

In troubled times, America could always count on Marquis de Lafayette.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased that we are able to take this resolution up today honoring the Marquis de Lafayette. Those of us who grew up in Lafayette County knew that there was some special meaning to the name of our county.

It was Lillard County once upon a time, and after Lafayette's visit to the State of Missouri, St. Louis to be exact, the General Assembly of our State named the western county which borders Jackson County, which now encompasses Kansas City, named it after Marquis de Lafayette and called it Lafayette County. We in Lafayette County are very proud of the reason and the heritage that this county has been so named.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to my friend and colleague, a noted physician, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY).

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from South Carolina for giving me time.

I also want to pay tribute and thank my colleague, friend and student of history, the distinguished Armed Services Committee chairman, Mr. SKELTON, for bringing this very important resolution to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a native of Lafayette, Louisiana, to pay tribute to the Marquis de Lafayette and the French culture that continues to leave an indelible mark on south Louisiana. It is not by coincidence that my hometown is named after this French hero of America's Revolutionary War.

During the Acadian deportation of 1755, thousands of men, women and children were expelled from Nova Scotia. Some returned to France, but many sailed through to the French colony of Louisiana, where, over the centuries, they have established their own unique French-Acadian or what we now call Cajun culture.

It is now estimated that there are over 450,000 Acadian descendants in Louisiana alone, and nearly 250,000 claimed French to be their principal language.

Last week, I introduced House Resolution 398 to congratulate newly elected French President Nicolas Sarkozy on his recent victory, as well as to recognize the longstanding relationship between the United States and our friends in France.

Clearly, nowhere is this relationship between our two countries displayed more than right here in this Chamber where each day we face the portraits of America's first President, George Washington, but also America's adopted son, Marquis de Lafayette.

It is clearly fitting that we recognize the Marquis de Lafayette's accomplishments on the 250th anniversary of his birth today. I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

The distinguished gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) outlined the history of the Marquis de Lafayette's accomplishments, and I am not going to repeat all of that at this time. But suffice it to say, clearly the Marquis de Lafayette was a great patriot and a great friend of America, and the relationship between Marquis de Lafayette and our first President is emblematic of the relationship between our two great countries.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, but at this time I want to commend the chairman of the Armed Services Committee for recognizing the Marquis de Lafayette, and to recognize the strong relationship that has been so firm, so important, and that is the alliance with our first ally, the Republic of France.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, let me give a special thanks to my friend from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) who, among other assets, has a sense of history which has been exhibited this morning. I appreciate him speaking, as well as the gentleman from Louisiana speaking of his hometown of Lafayette. It was very kind of you to do so, as well as my friend from Texas coming here to discuss the Marquis de Lafayette.

As the gentleman from South Carolina has pointed out, Marquis de Lafayette was a very unusual man. Doing what he did at such an early age and making such a great impact upon this country, it is fitting and proper that we, as a body, honor him, honor his memory, and honor the fact that he was of such great assistance and help to General George Washington in those very difficult days.

As one leaves Lexington, my hometown, on the Missouri River and travels on Highway 224 towards Kansas City, one goes through Wellington, Missouri; Waterloo, Missouri; and Napoleon, Missouri, in that order, and it is rather interesting that part of French history between Lexington and

Kansas City is reflected in the names of those communities.

History has not borne out who named them such. There is no way for us to record or learn the genesis of those three names except they do exist, Wellington, Napoleon, and in between, Waterloo. But whoever did it did us all a favor so we can discuss and learn more of history; and today we are learning more about the Marquis de Lafayette and honoring his memory.

Mr. JINDAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Marquis de La Fayette on the 250th anniversary of his birth. General Lafayette dedicated his life to the creation of democracy in America and France. Revered by many in both the new world and the old, La

Fayette became known as the "Hero of Two Worlds."

At the age of 19, La Fayette invested his own funds and outfitted a frigate, sailing for America in 1777, where he joined the forces of General George Washington, with whom he established a lifelong friendship.

In 1781, the Battle of Yorktown, Virginia was a crucial victory by the combined American and French force led by General George Washington and the Marquis de La Fayette, over the British army commanded by General Lord Charles Cornwallis. The surrender of Cornwallis' army caused the British government to negotiate an end to the American Revolutionary War.

In my home state of Louisiana, the Marquis de Lafayette has an enduring legacy by having a leading parish and city named in his honor. Lafayette, Louisiana is one of the fastest growing communities in the South. Lafayette's energy, telecommunications and agriculture industries are of national importance.

The parish of Lafayette Louisiana is the site of a year-long commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the birth of the Marquis de La Fayette throughout 2007. The 2007 commemoration includes exhibitions, festivals, music, conferences and lectures.

Known for its unique cuisine, music, outstanding hospitality, Cajun and Creole language and traditions, Lafayette welcomes visitors of all ages to this full year of events devoted to Louisiana's French heritage, and focusing on La Fayette, the "Hero of Two Worlds."

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker I would like to thank Lafayette, Louisiana's City Parish President Joey Durel and his wife Lynne for their leadership of the 2007 commemoration. May La Fayette's vision of democracy and freedom we enjoy today—be cherished always.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 171, honoring Marquis de Lafayette on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of his birth. Marquis de Lafayette certainly holds a special place in the history of our country. It was his support for the ideals of our Revolutionary warriors that helped give birth to the greatest nation in the world. In fact, due to his support for the revolution, and the aid he provided to the colonist in their struggle for independence, Marquis de Lafayette was voted by Congress the rank and commission of major general in the Continental Army. Lafayette offered his services as an unpaid volunteer. On July 31, 1777 Congress passed a resolution, "that his services be accepted, and that, in consideration of his zeal, illustrious family, and connections, he

have the rank and commission of major-general of the United States."

He was a man that was admired by our first President George Washington and that affection was mutual. In fact Marquis de Lafayette even named his son after our first President, and Washington was the godfather to Lafayette's child.

This is a gentleman that is so revered in American history that in 2002, he was posthumously made an honorary citizen of the United States; one of only six persons so honored. Likewise, a portrait of Lafayette hangs in the House Chamber.

Marquis de Lafayette, held a strong belief in freedom, he advocated the abolition of slavery in the Americas, he favored equal legal rights for religious minorities in France, and he was a prominent figure in the French Revolution. Now some will cite the fact that Lafayette himself owned slaves as a sign of hypocrisy, but he encouraged George Washington to free his own slaves as an example to others. Lafayette would subsequently purchase an estate in French Guinea and settle his slaves there and offered a place for Washington's slaves to live also. Lafayette was famously quoted as saying, "I would never have drawn my sword in the cause of America if I could have conceived thereby that I was founding a land of slavery."

The fact that Lafayette was the first foreign dignitary to address the House of Representatives symbolizes the wonderful relationship between France and the United States. In light of the recent elections in France, I hope that our leaders in Congress, the Senate, and the White House will maintain our strong ties with the newly elected leader of France, Nicolas Sarkozy. France is a nation that the United States has shared the same values with since its inception. Lafayette symbolized the assistance America received from Europe in the struggle for independence, just like United States aid to France during World Wars I and II stemmed in part from shared values of democracy and freedom, values that Lafayette held. I am confident that the administration of President Sarkozy will work earnestly with our leaders and continue in the great tradition of not only a French hero, but a true American hero, Marquis de Lafayette.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 171, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1045

EXPRESSING SYMPATHY TO THE CITIZENS OF GREENSBURG, KANSAS

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 400) expressing the sympathy of the House of Representa-

tives to the citizens of Greensburg, Kansas, over the devastating tornado of May 4, 2007.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 400

Whereas on the evening of Friday, May 4, 2007, a tornado struck the community of Greensburg, Kansas;

Whereas this tornado was classified as an EF-5, the strongest possible type, with winds estimated at 205 miles per hour;

Whereas 9 lives were lost;

Whereas approximately 95 percent of Greensburg was destroyed, causing over 1,500 residents to be displaced from their homes; and

Whereas the strength, courage, and determination of the citizens of Greensburg, Kansas, have been evident following the tornado: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its deepest sympathies to the citizens of Greensburg, Kansas, over the devastation caused by the powerful tornado that struck the community on May 4, 2007; and

(2) expresses its support as the citizens of Greensburg continue their efforts to rebuild their community and their lives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) and the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H. Res. 400.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, on May 4, 2007, life in the close-knit community of Greensburg, Kansas, changed forever. At approximately 9:45 p.m. central time, a massive tornado all but destroyed the Kansas town of Greensburg, Kansas, located in south central Kansas, east of Dodge City, Kansas. The tornado was classified as an EF-5, a large and extremely dangerous mile-wide tornado with winds up to 205 miles per hour.

The 20-minute warning time was reasonable, but the tornado was so destructive that nine people in Greensburg unfortunately died, and 95 percent of the town was damaged or destroyed. While the infrastructure damage is crushing, citizens of Greensburg have refused to let this incident crush their spirit, hope and determination. Resilience is the watchword, and rebuilding is the daily driving force.

We're here today as representatives of all the citizens of this great Nation to express our sympathy to the residents of Greensburg for this tragedy of historic proportions. More importantly, we stand in support for the citi-

zens of Greensburg as they heal their families and rebuild their community.

I stand here in support of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, to the gentleman from Maryland, I'm very grateful for his support and for his help in bringing this legislation to the House floor today.

I rise in support of H. Res. 400, which I introduced along with my fellow colleagues from Kansas. It does express the sympathy of the House of Representatives for the loss of life and the tremendous property damage to a community in my district of a population of about 1,500.

The tornado occurred at about 10 p.m. on Friday evening, May 4, now a little more than 2 weeks ago. It was an F-5 tornado, one of the most powerful tornadoes to strike the United States in more than 8 years. It was fortunate that the people of Greensburg had a 20-minute warning, that the National Weather Service performed its function. An emergency was declared, and people had 20 minutes to try to save their families' lives and to move to safety.

My guess is that that 20 minutes went by in a flash. Mr. Speaker, while 20 minutes may go by in a flash, I'm sure that the 2 minutes that the tornado was on the ground went by very, very slowly. It was an eternity. In that 20 minutes of warning, people did what they could do. In that 2 minutes, at least the buildings of the community were destroyed; 205-mile-an-hour winds can do great damage.

Mr. Speaker, we in Kansas are accustomed from time to time to tornadoes, but never have I seen the devastation and destruction that occurs to one community. The losses are significant. Certainly our prayers and support are with the families of those 10 individuals who died that night, but 95 percent of the town is gone. There is no high school. There is no grade school. There is no city hall. There is no hospital. There is no library. The entire business district, six or seven blocks of a business district in the county seat town, not a business remains.

Sixty-three people were injured, and while faced with such destruction, I've been to Greensburg seven times in the last 2 weeks, I have seen nothing but the sense of spirit about rebuilding lives. You can stand in front of a home that is totally destroyed and listen to the people there sorting through the rubble, trying to find something of value, and when you have a conversation with them, it doesn't take long before a smile appears on their face and they talk about how things could be worse than they are, how we're better off than our neighbors, how we'll get through this.

And so, Mr. Speaker, in what is truly a time of devastation, it's also truly a